



**Minutes from the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors  
Monday, September 13, 2021**

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The Board of Directors held a Regular Board Meeting on Monday, September 13, 2021. This was a Zoom Meeting with login information posted on the Mead School District website. Directors Denholm, Olson, Cannon and Green were present. Director Burchard was excused. Also attending were Superintendent Shawn Woodward, Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson and Assistant Superintendents Heather Havens and Jared Hoadley.

**I. Approval of Agenda**

Noting receipt of an updated Consent Agenda, Director Green made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, as presented. Director Cannon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

Director Olson made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 30, 2021, Regular Board Meeting, as amended (last name spelling correction for Sarah Roper). Director Green seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**III. Remarks for the Good of the Schools**

Vice-President Denholm, prior to opening the meeting to the public for comments, provided the opportunity for board members and district office staff to comment on non-agenda items.

Director Green shared she has heard from many parents who expressed their appreciation for a great start to the school year. Director Denholm added his thanks to Superintendent Woodward and the entire Mead School District staff on a smooth start to the year. Superintendent Woodward noted that the start of any school year requires a coordinated effort on the part of all staff but, like last year, once again this year, starting school in the midst of a pandemic has its own unique challenges. He thanked parents for their support and thanked staff for seeing to all of the details that resulted in a good start to the year.

In response to a question from Director Denholm, Business & Operations Assistant Superintendent Jared Hoadley talked about the high number of positive COVID cases among athletes that led to Spokane Regional Health District requesting the *Battle of the Bell* football game be cancelled. Director Denholm noted other local area high school football games were also cancelled.

Vice-President Denholm opened the meeting for Public Comment asking speakers to state their name and reminding that the time limit for individual remarks is three minutes.

**Public Comments**

Rich Gockley -Reading an email he had earlier sent to the board and Superintendent Woodward, Mr. Gockley expressed how disheartening it is to him to see elected officials “stand by and let the Governor overreach his authority” for a fabricated pandemic. 73% of Mead constituents want medical choice. He referenced the August 16, 2021, meeting where the board was asked if they were willing to stand up for Mead children if the state wanted to “inject them with an experimental drug” and reminded that Michael Cannon was the only board member who indicated he would object to that. He was additionally critical of the decision to move board meetings to a Zoom only format following the August 16<sup>th</sup> in-person meeting.

He stated the pandemic is a political stunt . . . clearly a battle between good and evil. He referenced 1938 when good men rounded up Jews and conducted medical experiments on them because they were “just following orders.” He equated that situation to now because it appears the board is just going to stand by and allow children to be coerced into taking an untested, experimental gene therapy drug. He referenced the Nuremberg trials that followed World War II sharing his belief that “good” will prevail and we will see trials similar to Nuremberg to hold people, like the board, accountable for crimes against humanity. In conclusion, he reminded there is still time to stand up for good stating, “all that is required for evil to succeed is for good people to stand by and do nothing.”

Cyrstalynn Varozza - In agreement with what was shared by Mr. Gockley. Even though her children made a choice to attend school it is very hard for her to send them to school with the requirement that they must wear a mask. As a fairly new member of the Brentwood community it is frustrating that she has never been allowed inside the school building and that she is not able to talk in-person to teachers. She wants to be able to see first-hand how things are going at school. She also questioned why PE is taking place inside with masks when the weather is gorgeous and students could be outside, without a mask, and breath.

Jenny Bright - Adding to comments she made at the last board meeting, Ms. Bright shared she is hopeful, as previously shared by Superintendent Woodward, that parents, beginning September 19<sup>th</sup>, will be allowed in buildings. She advocated for purchasing charging laptop carts so elementary students can leave their laptop at school rather than transporting it home each evening. In the event a classroom or school is closed because of COVID students can simply go to school the next day and retrieve their laptop.

Darla Bennett - In agreement with what was shared by previous speakers. Based on the survey the district sent out in August a very large percentage of families what choice when it comes to masks. Referencing comments from earlier board meetings about the reliability of the initial survey data, she requested another survey be sent out. She additionally addressed the district's COVID board. She wonders who they are and do they have more control than the school board. She advocated for more transparency and believes nurses have too much power (gave an example of child being sent home for a simple runny nose).

Steve Allen - Has children attending both Mt. Spokane and Creekside. Does not understand the mask mandate especially when you watch TV and see the number of unmasked fans in football stadiums. He referenced Farwell students sitting on the floor “like dogs” eating breakfast and lunch, commenting that prisoners are treated better at Quantanamo Bay.

Sarah Roper - Speaking on behalf of the majority of Mead families she strongly advocated for choice regarding masks. Regarding the *Battle of the Bell* football game she contended Spokane Regional Health District should not have been able to make the decision to cancel the event. She advocated for students to be able to use lockers and also hopes parents will be allowed inside schools starting September 19<sup>th</sup>. She would like COVID data shared at each board meeting and would like parents to be able to attend COVID board meetings. She advocated for consistency at all schools and shared she has a daughter whose assigned seat at lunch faces a wall.

Brandon Ricci - Local firefighter who expressed his appreciation to the district for all of their hard work. He believes it is inappropriate to compare the current mask mandate/COVID situation to Jews and Quantanamo Bay. His kids are excited to be able to go to school every day. He encouraged the board/district to focus on kids and their learning.

Karly S - Echoed the thanks/appreciation for the board and district shared by Mr. Ricci. She is the mom of a new Developmental PreSchool student and was blindsided by the mask requirement for her child. Last spring they were told there was no mask requirement for children

under five years of age with special needs. Wishes they had been given more lead time regarding masks so they could have worked on wearing a mask at home.

Superintendent Woodward extended an invitation for the public to reach out to building principals, teachers or District Office with questions and/or concerns. He additionally invited the board to let him know if there are specific topics they would like addressed/reported on at future board meetings.

Vice-President Denholm thanked all for their comments.

**IV. Continuing Business - none**

**V. New Business**

**A. Consent Agenda**

Director Green made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. Director Olson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. Contract/Bargaining Agreement  
Mead Education Association**

Business & Operations Assistant Superintendent Jared Hoadley presented a tentative one-year contract agreement (September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022) with the Mead Education Association for board consideration. The association ratified this tentative agreement on September 1, 2021. The terms of this tentative contract agreement were reviewed with the board at an earlier Closed Session meeting.

Dr. Hoadley reported bargaining was a cordial and productive process.

Chief Financial Officer Heather Ellingson, in response to a question from Director Olson, stated she will put together and share with the board the amount of the IPD (2%) that will be covered by levy dollars. (The IPD is similar to the old COLA and represents a pay increase for all employees. Because the state flow-through IPD amount is based on the prototypical school funding model, the IPD for positions staffed at a higher level, like nurses, is covered by levy dollars.)

Director Green made a motion to approve the one-year tentative collective bargaining agreement between the Mead Education Association and the Mead School District, as presented. Director Olson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**C. Contract/Bargaining Agreement  
Mead Service Support Professionals**

Human Resources Director Keri Hutchins presented a tentative four-year contract agreement (September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2025) with Mead Service Support Professionals for board consideration. The association, which includes para educators, bus assistants, classified nurses, interpreters and those working as cooks in Nutrition Services, has ratified this tentative agreement. The terms of this tentative contract agreement were reviewed with the board at an earlier Closed Session meeting.

Director Olson made a motion to approve the four-year tentative collective bargaining agreement between Mead Service Support Professionals and the Mead School District, as presented. Director Cannon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**D. Contract/Bargaining Agreement  
Mead Association of Educational Office Personnel**

Human Resources Director Keri Hutchins presented a tentative two-year contract agreement (September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2023) with Mead Association of Educational Office Personnel

(administrative assistant group) for board consideration. The association has ratified this tentative agreement. The terms of this tentative contract agreement were reviewed with the board at an earlier Closed Session meeting.

Director Cannon made a motion to approve the two-year tentative collective bargaining agreement between Mead Association of Educational Office Personnel and the Mead School District, as presented. Director Olson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**E. Contract/Bargaining Agreement  
Mead Classified Public Employees Association**

Human Resources Director Keri Hutchins presented a tentative three-year contract agreement (September 1, 2021 - August 31, 2024) with Mead Classified Public Employees Association (custodial group) for board consideration. The association has ratified this tentative agreement. The terms of this tentative contract agreement were reviewed with the board at an earlier Closed Session meeting.

Director Cannon made a motion to approve the three-year tentative collective bargaining agreement between Mead Classified Public Employees Association and the Mead School District, as presented. Director Green seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**F. Contract/Bargaining Agreement  
Mead Extracurricular Employees Association**

Human Resources Director Keri Hutchins presented a tentative four-year contract agreement (September 1, 2021 - August 31, 2025) with Mead Extracurricular Employees Association (coaches) for board consideration. The association has ratified this tentative agreement. The terms of this tentative contract agreement were reviewed with the board at an earlier Closed Session meeting.

Director Olson made a motion to approve the four-year tentative collective bargaining agreement between Mead Extracurricular Employees Association and the Mead School District, as presented. Director Green seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**G. Student Travel Proposal  
Mead High School Performing Arts Department**

Secondary Education Director Darren Nelson presented a request for preliminary/conditional approval from the Mead High School Performing Arts Department to travel to Orlando, Florida, April 6 - April 12, 2022, to participate in educational workshops and performance opportunities available through Walt Disney World, for board consideration. A trip of this magnitude takes place once every four years.

While the impact of COVID on travel in April is uncertain, preliminary/conditional approval is requested at this time so that non-binding travel arrangements can be made. Waiting to make reservations would result in missing the risk-free booking window and much higher prices.

Approximately 140 students, in addition to teachers Dorothy Baldwin (orchestra), Greg Bertsch (drama), Emily McKinney (choir), Rob Lewis (band) and Brandon Campbell (band), plus 14 parent chaperones, will make the trip (7:1 student/adult ratio). Students will miss two days of school and the five teachers accompanying students will need a substitute teacher for April 11 and April 12.

The estimated per student cost is \$2,075 with fundraising opportunities available. As required in House Bill 1660, the Mead High School Performing Arts Department will work to assure students are able to participate regardless of financial means, resources or status.

Director Green made a motion to grant preliminary/conditional approval of the presented request from the Mead High School Performing Arts Department to travel to Orlando, Florida, April 6-12, 2022. Director Cannon seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Director Denholm asked that the board receive regular updates on the status of this trip.

#### **H. Employee Termination**

Following a motion from Director Green, a second from Director Cannon, and unanimous approval, action on this item was deferred until after the Executive Session.

Confirming Custodial Services Director Cathy Fayant provided appropriate written notice to Sean Kaczor of the board's intended action on this agenda item, Director Cannon made a motion to accept the recommendation of Custodial Services Director Cathy Fayant and Human Resources Director Keri Hutchins to terminate the employment of Sean Kaczor for the reasons provided. Director Green seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### **VI. Reports**

#### **A. Superintendent's Report and Discussion Items**

Regarding COVID safety protocols and the district's COVID Committee, Superintendent Woodward referenced the district's website where safety protocols are posted and information on the make-up and duties of the district's COVID Committee are clearly set forth.

The Department of Health requires that each school district have a District COVID Coordinator. In Mead that individual is Business & Operations Assistant Superintendent Jared Hoadley who, along with Transportation Director Brian Liberg, Public Information Officer Todd Zeidler and school nurses Ruth Erb & Carrie Dinwoodie, serve on the district's COVID Committee. The primary purpose of the committee is to look at activities that fall outside normal COVID protocols and brainstorm ways to allow a requesting group to hold their event safely.

Responding to a question from the board, Superintendent Woodward shared having a Parent Rep on the committee was not something considered last year when the committee started meeting. However, this is something the district could now consider. To provide additional clarity, Superintendent Woodward reminded it is a committee, not a board, and that Spokane Regional Health District serves as a consultant to the committee. Dr. Hoadley explained Ms. Erb and Ms. Dinwoodie also represent the district at weekly health district School Nurse meetings and that the district has a very good working relationship with Spokane Regional Health District. Superintendent Woodward added that when looking at requests to add activities/events Dr. Hoadley's general attitude is one that looks for how the district can get to saying "yes" and do it safely.

Addressing the district's cautious approach, at the beginning of the school year, to allowing volunteers in schools and hosting events like elementary Ice Cream Socials, Superintendent Woodward shared this was done out of an abundance of caution to make sure processes and procedures were solidly in place before opening up buildings to outsiders. During the week of September 20<sup>th</sup> the plan is to host outdoor Ice Cream Socials. The district will, in the very near future, look at the process for allowing parents and volunteers inside school buildings.

Both Director Olson and Director Cannon expressed interest in attending a COVID Committee meeting.

Director Cannon inquired about the decision-making process and how much discretion there is regarding decisions like whether or not to allow students to use lockers. Superintendent Woodward shared the COVID Committee meets on a weekly basis. Last year, with the primary objective of keeping school open, the district followed recommendations regarding things like lockers and volunteers in school very closely. Right now, with COVID cases so high, in order to avoid the congregation of students at lockers, the district would not be inclined to allow the use

of lockers. However, regarding outside volunteers, there is more wiggle room. Superintendent Woodward assured COVID protocols are reviewed regularly by the District Leadership Team.

Noting decisions have to be made at some level, and that no decision is in stone (there must be room to revisit decisions), Director Cannon expressed interest in being a part of the process. When decisions are made there needs to be some measurable criteria that can be looked at. He is a proponent of hearing parent and student concerns. Not every situation is black and white. Decisions should be based on real information, not just arbitrary criteria.

Superintendent Woodward, regarding hard data, referenced the high current COVID case count in Spokane County (869). The board has tasked district administration with keeping schools open, and with the high case counts, not just in the county but in district schools, careful consideration must be given to topics like lockers and volunteers to make sure changes in protocols do not exacerbate COVID case counts in district schools.

Director Cannon expressed his desire that decisions be made based on district data. He, for example, suggested comparing district COVID data with the Coeur d' Alene School District as they are similar in size. He also wants schools to stay open but struggles when high level data is used to make local decisions. He would like the district to better explain the reasons for protocols and support those protocols with district data.

On the website Superintendent Woodward pointed out the district's COVID dashboard where COVID cases are reported. This dashboard is updated on a daily basis. Like last year the district, to date, is not seeing COVID spread in schools. Although, unlike at this time last year, this is harder to determine because of student participation in athletics. Parents with questions about COVID protocols were invited to contact school principals or district office. The district does not take lightly the COVID restrictions that are currently in place. The district's position is that they want to say "yes" when they can safely do so.

Regarding enrollment, Superintendent Woodward shared elementary FTE is currently 4018. Even though this is down from the 2019/20 FTE of 4231, the district is pleased with the number of enrolled elementary students. Eighty students are being served in the district's virtual program. While middle school and high school enrollment numbers are not yet available, in talking with principals, schools feel very full. ALE enrollment is up by approximately 45 students as compared to last year. More accurate enrollment information will be shared at the next board meeting.

#### **VII. Executive Session**

At 7:10 pm Vice-President Denholm called for an Executive Session of approximately 15 minutes for the purpose of reviewing the performance of a public employee.

At 7:25 pm Vice-President Denholm returned the meeting to Open Session.

#### **VIII. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 pm.

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**President**

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**Secretary**